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Van Cortlandt, Gertrude.

Records of the rise and progress
of the city of Ottawa, from the
foundation of the Rideau canal to
the present time.

Ottawa, 1856.



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Records of the City of Ottawa.



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RECORDS

OF

THE RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

THE CITY OF OTTAWA,

FROM

THE FOUNDATION OF THE RIDEAU CANAL



THE PRESENT TIME.

BY
GERTRUDE VAN CORTLANDT.

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PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, RIDEAU STREET.

1858.

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OF

OF

FROM

TO

BY

GERTRUDE VAN CORTLANDT.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE OTTAWA-CITIZEN, RIDEAU STREET.

1858.





TO

Lady Head.

THIS UNPRETENDING TRIFLE

IS

With Her Ladyship's Permission

MOST RESPECTFULLY

~ DEDICATED. ~



P R E F A C E .

On reading the history of Canada, it is greatly to be regretted that many most important events, connected with its rise and progress, are lost to us for ever, simply because no record of passing events was kept at the time. With a view, in some measure, of obviating similar misfortunes, occurring in the early history of our infant city, I have thrown a few imperfect notes together, and for which I do not lay any claim to originality, having derived all my information from other parties. To the Introduction I am entitled to no merit whatever, nor could I be, inasmuch as it in a great measure refers to events which fell under the cognizance of the writer, but which took place some years before the period of my birth.

GERTRUDE VAN CORTLANDT.

Ottawa, April, 1858.

INTRODUCTION.

If we look retrospectively at the City of Ottawa, as it was twenty-five years since, and compare our then "*local habitation*," with its ungainly name, (Bytown,) and its thirty or forty houses, a tithe only of these, too, being of stone, with what "THE CITY OF THE WOODS" now is, well, indeed, may the metamorphosis call forth expressions of surprise and astonishment. Let us only go back to 1834, the ever memorable year of the second cholera, and when, what with the devastation effected by the all-conquering arm of "*the King of Terrors*" and the abscondings and removals consequent upon stagnation of business, we were reduced both literally and virtually to the piteous condition of a *By Town*, or out of the way place,—when a solitary steamer, in a state of hapless inactivity, might be seen moored at the wharf for three days in the week, for want of occupation,—when, in like manner, the royal mail was only delivered and dismissed every alternate day,—when a plain two story wooden house was pronounced by one of our military governors to be a splendid hotel for so small a place,—when we had neither a printing press, a foundry, a tannery, or even a butcher's stall, in the whole town—wanting entirely in a fire-engine, to quench our not unfrequent conflagrations, and scarcely possessing a patent pail to carry water with, even though we had one ;—and then look forward to what we have arrived at in less than a quarter of a century, with our five printing-presses, those mighty engines for the diffusion both of facts and falsehoods, our large, substantial and commodious hotels, our various foundries, tanneries, and markets, together with our half dozen fire-engines, and all other concomitants. Well, indeed, I repeat, may the primitive denizens of our quondam hamlet not only evince sentiments of wonder at our astonishing advancement, but feel pride as well in the circumstance of similar expressions having been spontaneously elicited both from the tourist and the topographer. In illustration thereof, perhaps, we cannot do better than copy the description of our infant city, as it is given in the last edition of the Canada Directory :—

"OTTAWA, C. W.—Formerly called *Bytown*.—One of the chief cities of Central Canada, situated on the Ottawa River, 87 miles from its confluence with the St. Lawrence, and at the mouth of the Rideau River. The city obtained its original name from its founder, Colonel By, an officer of the

Royal Engineers, whom the Imperial Government commissioned in 1825 to superintend the construction of the Rideau Canal. In 1854, Bytown, by an Act of the Provincial Parliament, was created a city, and its name changed to that which it now bears. The canal divides the city into Upper and Lower Town, and enters the Ottawa through eight magnificent stone locks. A massive cut-stone bridge, erected by the Royal Sappers and Miners, crosses the canal, which has already, from the extension and rapidly increasing traffic of the city, become utterly inadequate to the due accommodation of the public. The city is well laid out; its streets are wide, regular, and uniform, and for the most part they intersect each other at right angles. The principal quarters are supplied with gas; and an early construction of water works is in contemplation. At the western extremity of the city is the celebrated Chaudière Falls, a scene of imposing grandeur and beauty, and unsurpassed in America, except by the Niagara Falls, which it rivals in many respects. A suspension bridge, erected by the Provincial Government at a cost of \$66,448, spans this foaming chasm, and unites Upper with Lower Canada. At the north-east end of the city are two other Falls, over which the waters of the Rideau River pour themselves with wild impetuosity into the bosom of the Ottawa; and although inferior to the Chaudière in point of sublimity and grandeur, they are not without many attractions to the admirer of nature's works. Altogether, the scenery around the city is of unsurpassed beauty,—wild, romantic, and picturesque,—presenting a variety rarely to be met with in any other part of the Province. The commerce of Ottawa is constituted almost wholly of lumber, both sawn and square, which passes through the city from the forests in the rear. More of this truly Canadian staple is manufactured in the district of which Ottawa is the emporium, than in any other part of Canada, and the supply furnished here is the main dependence of the spring and fall fleets of shipping which arrive in this country for return cargoes to Europe; as also to a large extent (of sawn lumber) of the markets in the United States, in which the demand is constantly increasing. The Hull iron mines, distant from the city about seven miles, are being worked successfully, and they promise to be, before many years, a source of considerable wealth. The future of Ottawa is not difficult to foresee: situated in the centre of a fertile and rapidly developing country; holding, as it were, the key of the lumber trade: possessing inexhaustible water power, which men of enterprise and capital are yearly turning to account, as also every facility of communication with the principal cities and towns in Canada and with the neighboring Republic,—it is destined at no distant period to become a place of important manufacturing operations; and in the event of the Ottawa and Georgian Bay Ship Canal being carried into effect, it will stand on the great water highway to the West. Its natural capabilities of defence are great and important."

RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE CITY OF OTTAWA.

OTTAWA.

As Ottawa, (formerly Bytown) dates its origin to the commencement of the Rideau Canal and first Chaudiere Bridge, it is our intention to begin this imperfect composition with a slight sketch of these great undertakings.

During the last American war, it was found that the transport of ordnance and other stores up the River St. Lawrence was attended in all cases with great hazard, and in many instances, it was found necessary to sink the batteaux, containing military stores, in order to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy. To avoid a repetition of similar disasters, in the event of another war with the United States, an international canal, connecting the waters of the River Ottawa and Lake Ontario, was projected in the Imperial Parliament. Amongst the warmest advocates of this measure was the Duke of Wellington, and, indeed, it was chiefly through his efforts that the Rideau Canal Bill was passed.

RIDEAU CANAL.

“While this work stands a splendid instance of the munificence of our paternal Government, and an imperishable monument of its fostering care, it will transmit to posterity with distinguished honor the name of Colonel By, with whom the idea of the work first originated, and who, by a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, was destined to superintend its construction.”—HAGERMAN’S REPORT, 1832.

Ground for the construction of the Rideau Canal was first broken on the 21st September, 1826, and it was the intention originally of the military authorities to allow of a width of only 20 feet for each lock, but it having been pointed out by the respective officers here to the Board of Ordnance in England that these dimensions were quite insufficient, it was ultimately

determined to enlarge them to 33 feet, width, and 134 feet, length. The adoption of this important measure was strongly favored by an unforeseen accident. Shortly after the works were commenced, a large and destructive fire broke out in the surrounding brush, which extended to the canal valley, and speedily consumed all the timber foundation of the locks and adjoining work-shops. The first stone of the locks thus enlarged was laid amidst great rejoicing in the autumn of 1827, by the late lamented Sir John, then Captain, Franklin, who was on his homeward route, after his second expedition. The first steamer, called the *Pumper*, passed through the canal on the 29th of May, 1832, and the canal was opened for general transport in August of the same year.

In the ascent from Ottawa to the Upper Rideau Lake, the summit level is 292 feet 3 inches, and the descent from the lake to Kingston is 165 feet 4 inches. The River Ottawa here is 126 feet 11 inches below Lake Ontario, and 110 feet above the level of the sea. The Rideau Canal was begun, continued, and finished under the command and superintendence of Lieut.-Colonel John By, and cost £803,774 5s. 6d., Sterling. From the opening of the canal in 1832, to the close of the year 1838, the expenses of the establishment and repairs amounted to £52,011, whilst the profits only reached £29,923, thus leaving an actual loss of £22,088. Last autumn, the Rideau Canal was transferred by the Imperial to the Provincial Government.

We conclude this portion of our subject with the following encomium of this great work, copied from the first pamphlet which was published on the subject :—

“The excellence of the workmanship and the superior construction of the locks and dams require no praise. They speak for themselves, and are the subject of much admiration, and, in the opinion of those most competent to judge of such works, exceed anything of the kind in any part of the world.”*

CHAUDIERE BRIDGES.

The first bridge thrown across the chasm of the Chaudiere Falls was a military structure, composed of wood, and the foundation was laid on the Hull side by the Countess of Dalhousie, on the afternoon of the same day as that commemorative of the beginning of the Rideau Canal. The first attempt at erecting it proved unsuccessful, owing, it was supposed, to a large stray stick of timber striking the enormous scow, which served as a

* Report for the principal officers of His Majesty's Board of Ordnance. by Joseph Hagerman, Esquire, Kingston, 1832.

base to erect the arch upon, thus breaking the moorings, when the vessel floated down the stream, and the bridge, in a considerable stage of advancement, fell, carrying with it eight of the workmen, one of whom was unfortunately drowned.

No time was lost in making a second attempt to erect a truss bridge across the river at the same place, and which was effected most satisfactorily by substituting iron chain cables for the scow. This bridge was opened in 1828, and a toll levied both on vehicles and foot passengers. The attention of the military authorities here was called to the insecure condition of this bridge about the year 1834, when two large chain cables were stretched across underneath for support. After the lapse of a short time, it was found that even with this precaution danger was to be apprehended, and barriers were thrown across at either end. Foot passengers, however, continued to cross it to the last, and a resident of this place actually walked over it only two hours before its fall, which took place on the afternoon of the 18th May, 1836. Its length was 199 feet.

During the period the bridge was closed, a scow, succeeded by a horse-boat, was established as a ferry across the river, from the old steamboat wharf (now Stirling's Brewery) to the opposite point, by the late Mr. John Bedard, and ceased on the opening of the present wire Suspension Bridge, which took place publicly on the 17th September, 1844. This bridge was built by the Province, constructed by an aged American contractor, named Wilkinson, and cost £15,060, currency.

CASUALTIES AT THE CHAUDIERE.

The first romantic incident, in which human life was concerned, took place on the morning of the 2nd of June, 1848. The following lucid and descriptive account of the event is copied from a number of the *Bytown Packet*, of that period:—

"Yesterday, about ten o'clock, A. M., an accident of a serious nature occurred. Two men were upon a crib of oak timber, endeavouring to make the head of the Chaudiere Government slides, but the current, proving too strong, carried them out of the channel. They observed their danger too late, and were carried with the crib over the lost channel. One of the men, named Baptiste Beaudran, jumped off the crib, and was carried over the chute. The other, named Paul Filardeau, kept his hold of the crib until it struck against the table rock. His situation was even here critical, for a dreadful rapid lay between him and the main shore, distant about one hundred and fifty yards. A crowd of the inhabitants, about 500 in number, were soon on the spot, and measures immediately taken to remove the poor fellow from his unpleasant situation. Messrs. McLachlin, Farley, Sullivan,

Keefe, and Larmouth, were most active in the attempt. A small cord was first thrown over, to which was attached a stronger one, and finally a cable or hawser, which was attached by Filardeau firmly to the rock. Rings were then slipped on to the hawser, to which cords were attached, and one end thrown over to the rock. Filardeau then tied the cords around his body, and slung himself to the rings. Great excitement occurred when he let himself off. He was immediately pulled in along the main rope, not, however, without touching the water several times. When the poor fellow reached the shore, he with the greatest coolness turned to his deliverers, and thanked them in both languages for their kindness. He then walked away, seeming not the least injured."

The miraculous escape of a person, after actually passing over the mighty cataract of the Chaudiere, occurred on Monday the 16th June, 1851. On this occasion four men, whilst trying to make the Government slides on a crib of timber, were in like manner carried by a breeze into the rapids.— One of them, Jean Baptiste Beaume, foreseeing the danger of their situation, immediately jumped off the crib, with the intention of gaining the pier, some 200 yards above the falls, but was mortally injured in the attempt, by a stick of floating timber crushing him against it. After passing the pier, a second man, named John Hawthorn, leaped into the rapids, with a desperate hope of gaining the shore, but was immediately carried over the cataract.— The remaining two men clung instinctively to one of the pieces of the crib, which was entirely wrecked, whilst passing over the mighty abyss, and, strange to say, escaped safe until the stick struck the little island below the falls, when it revolved, and one of these poor fellows, William Crow, was thrown off, and sank to rise no more. The other man, Francois Vandal, was most miraculously saved by the piece of timber floating into still water, and was the only mortal on record of the many who have travelled the same course who lived to tell the tale.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, August 22, 1854, the thrilling news of a large crib, with eight men upon it, being grounded immediately over the big kettle of the Chaudiere, was speedily circulated throughout the town, and led to the congregating of a large number of people at the place. This crib, unlike the two preceding ones, had been carried by a north-west wind from the Lower Canada side to the centre of the river, where it was arrested by the shallowness of the water, at the very edge of the falls, and at a spot where, to an ordinary spectator, relief seemed hopeless. The men were so chilled by the evaporation of the water, that they were compelled to wrap themselves up in their blankets, and presented a most heart-rending spectacle. By means similar to those used on the first occasion, however, after sundry fruitless attempts, a line reached them. A strong rope was

then fixed thereto, by which, after having been secured to a portion of the crib by the men upon it, they were all drawn safely over the abyss of waters, as represented in the accompanying engraving.

SAPPERS' BRIDGE.

The stone arch, called the SAPPERS' BRIDGE, which spans the Rideau Canal, and which, we are informed by a tablet on the southern side, (now nearly effaced, owing to the perishable nature of the stone) was built by the seventh and fifteenth companies of the Royal Sappers and Miners, was commenced in the year 1827, and completed in 1829. On its northern face, a very good specimen of ornamental stone cutting may be seen, being a representation of the ordnance arms. It was executed by a private soldier named Thomas Smith. The sun-dial on the Barrack Hill is another specimen of this man's handiwork. Both of these objects date back to the earliest days of the city, and constitute very interesting records. The material of which the Sappers' Bridge is constructed is the fossiliferous (Trenton) limestone of the place, but which, having been, unfortunately, selected from a superficial stratum, already evinces visible marks of corrosion and premature decay. The following remarks are copied from the *Ottawa Citizen* of May 13, 1854, and emanated from the pen of E. Billings, Esquire :—

"We observe that a large stone has been knocked out of the Sappers' Bridge, nearly over the keystone of the arch. The material of which this bridge is constructed is of an inferior description, and will ere many years crumble down into a heap of rubbish. The stone was taken, we believe, from the large quarry beside the eight locks, where the effects of the weather upon it can be well observed. The strata in this quarry consist of thick beds of a species of limestone, which is traversed in all directions by thin, irregular leaves of dark shale, and where the rock has long been exposed to the atmosphere, it divides into small fragments, parting along the course of the leaves of shale, so that a very few years serves to reduce it to a mass of ruin.

"This will soon be the fate of the Sappers' Bridge. In proof of this, we have only to direct attention to the manner in which the old cliff on both sides of the quarry is undergoing the process of delapidation, and also to the state of many of the large blocks in the parapets of the bridge. In selecting building materials, we would recommend our citizens to beware of the upper layers of the Trenton limestone of this vicinity. It is not fit for the purpose, as time will show on many of the buildings already erected."

S T E A M B O A T S .

The first steamer commenced running on the waters of the Ottawa between this city and Grenville in the year 1822, and was called the *Union*. This vessel, after running about six years, was succeeded by the *William King*, and very soon after, the steamer *Shannon*, built, as were both the preceding, at Hawkesbury, commenced running. This vessel was lengthened about the year 1836, and, after the opening of the Veaudreuil Canal, having been found too large for the trade, was taken down the Long Sault in May, 1837, and was succeeded in turn by the steamer *Speed*, which vessel was built at Hull, and intended for passengers only. This fine vessel was burnt in the latter end of June, 1849, and was replaced by another steamer, called the *Phoenix*, also built at Hull, and which made her first trip on the 7th June, 1849, and continues running to the present time.

P L A C E S O F P U B L I C W O R S H I P .

The first place of public worship erected in Bytown, in the year 1827, was a small wooden edifice situated on Sandy Hill, and devoted to the services of the Wesleyan Methodists. It was attended by the troops, and, shortly after its completion, was destroyed by a fire which committed great havoc, and threatened destruction to the whole place. A few years afterwards the Methodist Connection erected a stone chapel on Sparks Street, but which, being found too small, was sold in 1854 to the Roman Catholic community, and a site for a new and larger edifice was purchased from Mr. Sparks on Metcalfe Street, where the present Methodist Chapel stands.

R O M A N C A T H O L I C C H U R C H E S .

The first Roman Catholic Church was also a wooden edifice, and erected on the spot where the present Cathedral now stands. Divine service was first celebrated in it in the year 1832. This building, in like manner, having been found too small for the congregation, an association was formed on the 17th March, 1839, consisting of 4000 persons, for the purpose of erecting a stone church of large dimensions, the first stone of which was laid on October 25th, 1841. The first church was removed across the road on wooden rollers by Mr. John Perkins, in May, 1842, and in September, 1843, the new church was lengthened from 90 feet to 130, its present length. The first edifice, then used for a carpenter's shop, was accidentally burned in 1840, a short time previous to which the present church was dedicated to Divine worship.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

The present Presbyterian Church, better known as the Kirk of Scotland, was opened for Divine service in the year 1828. For the first two years after it was built, the use of it was granted to the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Being found too small for the increasing congregation, it was enlarged to its present dimensions in 1854.

KNOX'S CHURCH.

The dissensions which sprang up in Europe some years ago between the Old Kirk and the Free Church Presbyterians having extended to this country, led, in the year 1844, to the secession of the latter from the parent church. No time was lost in erecting an edifice. The Free Church, or Knox's Church, as it is often called, is a large wooden structure, situated on Besserer Street. It is currently stated, however, that a more central site has been deemed necessary, and that a lot has actually been purchased near Sappers' Bridge, and on which it is intended to construct a new building.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Church of England of this City stands at the western extremity of Sparks Street, a lot having been given by Mr. Sparks free. The foundation stone was laid in the year 1832. A few years afterwards it was discovered that some dishonest parties had removed the corner stone and purloined the coins. Divine service was first performed in the Church in the year 1833. In the year 1841, the edifice was enlarged by lengthening the transept, and adding two wings, which gives the church its present cruciform appearance. The growing wants of the congregation soon rendered the church thus enlarged once more too limited in space, and it was found necessary in 1855 to erect two side galleries for their accommodation. A splendid site for a new church in Central Ottawa was recently granted by the Board of Ordnance. Plans of the intended edifice have already been obtained, and approved of, and it is in contemplation to commence building at an early date. The projected structure, it is expected, will be of a very superior class, and constitute a very attractive object in the city.

HOSPITALS.

The first hospital erected in Bytown was a small wooden building situated on the bank of the river, near the terminus of the Ottawa and Prescott Railway, which was built in 1832, and intended for the use of cholera patients only, that dire disease having committed great havoc here during

that year, and again in 1834. This building was subsequently allowed to go to decay, and was ultimately torn down for firewood by the squatters in the neighbourhood. The Bytown General Hospital was opened by a few of the Grey Nuns of Montreal in the year 1845. Dissensions, however, having sprung up between the parties conducting it and the Protestant portion of the community, another institution intended solely for the use of all denominations of *Protestants*, was considered necessary. The site chosen is peculiarly healthy and commanding. The ground was granted by the Board of Ordnance. The first stone of the County of Carleton General Protestant Hospital was laid publicly on the 19th September, 1850, and the first patient was admitted on the 2nd April, 1852. The building is a very neat one, and an ornament to the City. Except a small annual Provincial grant, it is supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions, but is in a thriving condition.

M I L L S .

Soon after the Rideau Canal was commenced, a grist mill was erected by Mr. St. Louis on York street, which, it was thought, could be worked by the waste waters of the canal, but these having proved inadequate, operations were abandoned, and the mill was sold and removed shortly after its erection. In the year 1834, Mr. T. McKay erected the first manufacturing grist mill at New Edinburgh, near this city. It is one of the largest establishments of the kind in the Province. A few years later a second grist mill was erected at the Chaudiere Falls by Mr. D. McLachlin, and which was soon followed by a third, erected by Mr. John Perkins. These having been found inadequate to the demands of the surrounding farmers, another large manufacturing mill and oatmeal mill have been erected by Mr. Philip Thompson, in the same locality, and others are still in the course of erection. As might be expected, a number of saw mills exist in this immediate vicinity, the first erected about 1830, at the Rideau river, by Mr. St. Louis, was purchased by Mr. McKay, and supplanted in 1847 by another of larger dimensions, which combines all the machinery requisite for manufacturing laths and shingles, and has an extensive sash factory attached to it. Several large manufacturing saw mills have since been erected at the Chaudiere Falls, which give employment to a great many families, and lead to the circulation of immense sums of money annually.

N E W S P A P E R S .

On the 24th February, 1836, the first newspaper, called the *Bytown Independent*, was issued by the late J. Johnstone. This journal only outlived a few numbers, when the type and press were purchased by the late Doctor Alexander Christie, and the name of the paper was changed to the *Bytown Gazette*. A third paper soon followed, advocating pure Protestant principles, called first the *Ottawa Advocate*, secondly the *Orange Lily*, then the *Railway Times*, and now the *Ottawa Banner*. On the 29th of March, 1845, another journal, called the *Bytown Packet*, was started under the direction of Mr. Harris, which, two years afterwards, passed into the hands of Messrs. Friel & Bell. On the 30th October, 1849, Mr. Bell became sole proprietor, and on the 22nd of February, 1851, it assumed the name of the *Ottawa Citizen*. This journal now has a very extensive circulation, and is ably conducted. Still another weekly paper, called the *Monarchist*, was started a few years since, but the publication of which was relinquished a short time afterwards. The *Ottawa Tribune*, an ultra-Roman Catholic paper, was first issued on the 23rd July, 1854, whilst the first number of another journal, called *The Union*, appeared on the 31st March of the present year.

F O U N D R I E S .

It is about twenty years since the late Mr. H. Blasdell erected the first iron foundry. The success attending his enterprising undertaking speedily led to other similar establishments, and another was started by his brother, Mr. N. S. Blasdell, in Kent Street, Upper Town, but space being found too limited, the establishment was merged into the large foundry on Victoria Island. The business transacted at this establishment is very extensive.—Two other establishments, of the same kind, embracing steam engine making, conducted respectively by Mr. Perkins and Mr. T. M. Blasdell, are also in operation in Ottawa.

C L O T H F A C T O R I E S .

To the late Mr. McKay is referable the credit of erecting the first large cloth factory on the Ottawa. This extensive establishment was built in 1841. For the first six years, all the work was done by hand looms, but in 1847 a number of power looms were substituted for them. The factory is situated at New Edinburgh, and gives constant employment to a large number of persons, and has turned out 3,500 pairs of blankets in the

course of a year, the quality of which may in a measure be judged of from the fact of a gold medal having been awarded to Mr. McKay for blankets at the Exposition of all Nations, held in London in 1850.

H A T F A C T O R I E S .

From the facilities of obtaining peltries in this vicinity, it is not wonderful that hat factories should have been amongst the earliest undertakings, and we accordingly find Mr. H. Freligh commencing business in this line as early as the spring of 1839, at which time this gentleman employed a single assistant, and this only for about three months in the year. At the present moment, there are no less than four establishments of the sort here, turning out from ten to twelve thousand hats annually, of a first class quality, principally silk and fur. The manufacture of furs at the same establishments into articles adapted to the winter of Canada is very large, indeed.

B R I C K S .

A very energetic person, Mr. E. Walkley, opened the first brick-yard in Bytown, about the year 1832 ; and the first edifice, composed entirely of brick, was built about the year 1835.

D I S T I L L E R I E S .

In the year 1837, the late Mr. McKay erected the first distillery, at New Edinburgh, which was closed in 1852. About the year 1846, the late Mr. Isaac Smith also erected a distillery at the Deep Cut of the Rideau Canal. This edifice was destroyed by fire a few years afterwards, when the Board of Ordnance, fancying the banks of the canal might be injured from such a building, refused to sanction Mr. Smith's rebuilding on the same spot. A smaller distillery, owned by his son, is in operation on an island in the Rideau River.

M E C H A N I C S ' I N S T I T U T E .

Agreeably to a notice, a meeting of the inhabitants of Bytown was held at the hall of the Odd Fellows, M. U., St. Pauls Street, on 28th January, 1847, to organize a Mechanics' Institute, on which occasion a lecture was delivered by Rev. James T. Byrne, "On the importance of knowledge to the working classes." Owing to some imperfections in the organization, the working of the Institute was not attended with successful results, and in less than two years it fell to the ground. A second society of a similar descrip-

tion, called the Mercantile Library Association, sprang up soon afterwards, which speedily followed the fate of its predecessor. After a lapse of three or four years the matter was again taken in hands by a few energetic gentlemen, when it was attended with entire success. On the 31st January 1853, the Bytown Mechanics' Institute and Athenæum was incorporated, and the opening lecture was delivered by Dr. Van Cortlandt, on Saturday, 15th March, his subject being, *The Phenomena of Vegetation*. This Institution has already gained for itself a high position, and, if divested of Political and Sectarian bias, bids fair to rank ere long among the foremost in the Province. Some of its operations have been of so important a nature, and have served so good a purpose, in furthering the interests of the Ottawa Country, that it would be unjust not to notice them amongst the records of the place. In the latter end of June, 1853, it being understood that His Excellency the Governor General, Lord Elgin, and suite, together with other distinguished personages, intended visiting Bytown, the Managing Committee of the Institute considered that it would be conducive to the interest thereof to devise some means of bringing it particularly under their notice, when it was determined that an artistic and scientific local exhibition should take place on 28th July, and that His Excellency should be invited to open the same in person.

The Exhibition was opened accordingly on Thursday, the 28th July, by the Governor General, and was kept open to the public between the hours of ten in the morning and ten at night, until Saturday the 30th, and was visited by some thousands of people.

We copy the following from the report of the managing committee shortly after the event had taken place:—"Although the time for making preparations was exceedingly limited, considering the amount of labour that was performed, your committee feel much satisfaction in reporting that their success exceeded all that was anticipated.

"The Exhibition called forth the admiration of His Excellency and suite, and of all others who visited it. The results, your committee have no doubt, will be highly beneficial, by bringing the Institution into notice, and by giving it a standing in the eyes of the community at large, which it otherwise would not have obtained."

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

In the month of February, 1847, public attention was first called to the necessity of establishing a telegraph line between Bytown and Montreal, by Mr. Barry, who had delivered two or three lectures on the subject. A joint stock company was subsequently organized, and the contract was given to a very energetic person, the late John A. Torney. The first telegraphic despatch reached Bytown on the 9th of March, 1850, the subject of which was the Sherbrook election. About a fortnight afterwards, a reward was offered for the detection of the person or persons who had cut down several of the poles in the Township of Cumberland. "A new line of telegraph, " from Bytown to Prescott, under the direction of the Canada Grand Trunk " Telegraph Company, was commenced about the end of the year 1853, but " its course and objectionable construction having given umbrage to the " Directors of the Bytown and Prescott Railway Company, trouble and " litigation ensued."* The wires were cut in sundry places, and left lying on the road, and it was no uncommon thing to see farmers coming to town, having their loading secured with portions of the cut wire. Matters, however, were soon adjusted, and both lines are now in successful operation.

RAILROADS.

On the 11th January, 1851, a company was organised for carrying into operation the Bytown and Prescott Railroad, the ground for which was broken on the 9th October of the same year, after which a dinner took place at Doran's Hotel. The laying of the track was commenced on the 9th April, 1854, and the welcome whistle of the first rail-car was heard at five o'clock on the 20th December, 1854. It is most cheering to know that this great undertaking, which was successfully carried through in the face of unparalleled obstacles, is likely ere long to remunerate the stock-holders. This road is universally acknowledged to be one of the smoothest, and, in construction, one of the best and safest on the continent; and the merit of this great enterprise is mainly due to the untiring efforts of its zealous president, Robert Bell.

* Vide *Ottawa Citizen*, February 4th and 25th, 1854.

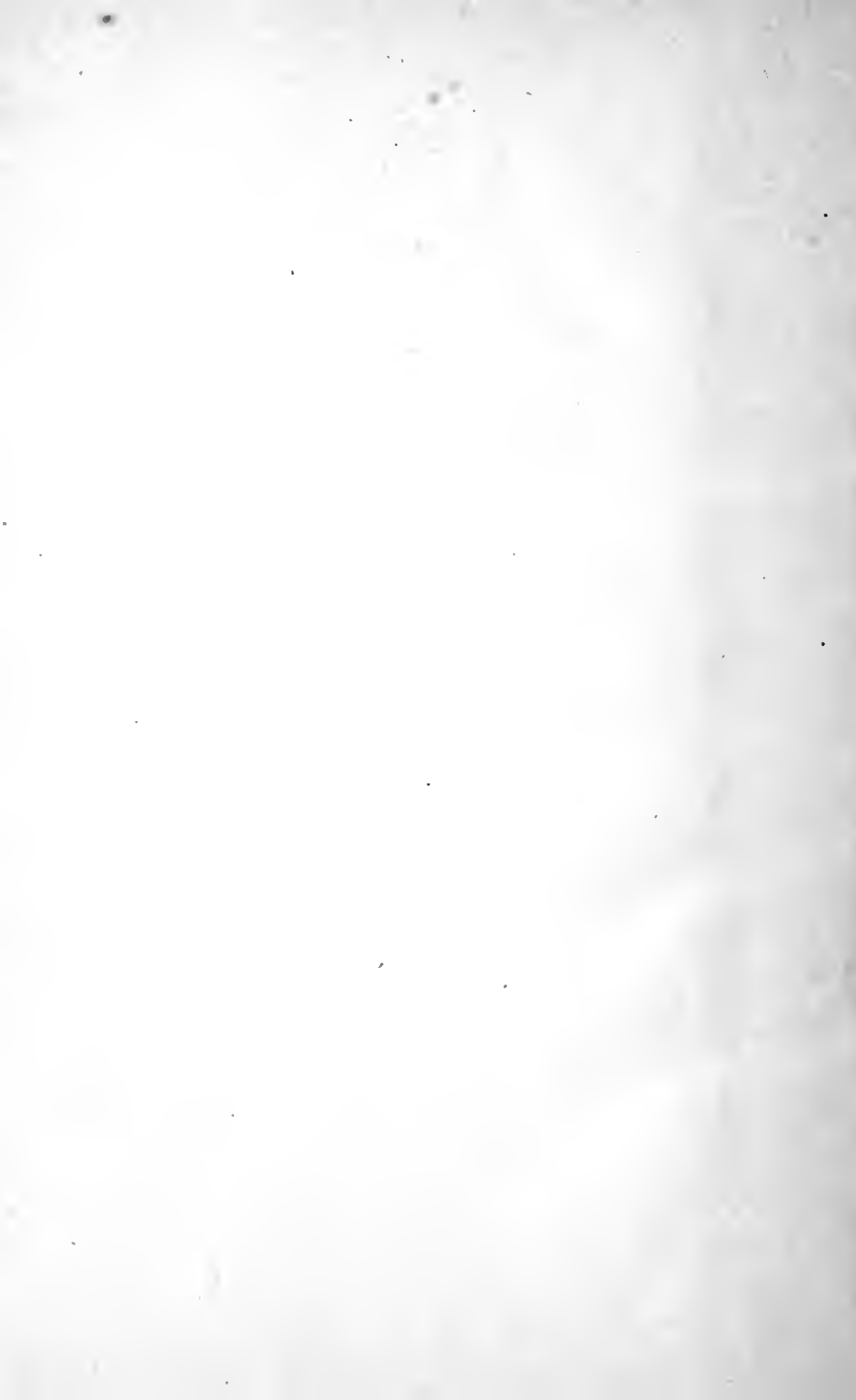
G A S .

A requisition, numerously signed by the inhabitants, appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on the 4th March, 1854, requesting the Mayor to call a public meeting, to consider the propriety of getting up a gas company, the result of which meeting was that an Act of Incorporation for the Bytown Consumers' Gas Company was obtained from the Provincial Parliament, and operations for carrying out the objects of the company were commenced in the following October. A casualty attended the progress of the work the summer succeeding :—On the 11th September, whilst in progress of erection, a great part of the front of the building fell, carrying with it several workmen engaged thereon, three of whom were very seriously injured, but fortunately none of the cases ended fatally. The city was first lighted with gas on the night of the 31st December, 1855. This building was the first on which slate was used for roofing ; and the entire cost of the undertaking amounted to about £12,000. It is likely to prove a remunerating speculation.

WOOD AND COPPER ENGRAVING.

It is about two years since Mr. Cox opened an office for engraving, on wood and copper. At first, the project was thought a bad one, but the superior workmanship and energetic character of this young gentleman has secured him both work and friends, and there is every appearance of his enterprise proving successful.







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